

Are You Prepped for Long Distance Travel?

By Fabian Ommar

Long-distance travel is a part of this time of the year, and even though the world *hasn't* returned to normal, the economy has reopened to a great degree in most places. Some nations are *still* locking down in response to new variants, and a few are even turning into police states despite what *true* science is saying about the risks of the virus and its mutations. Restrictions and mandates are making it difficult or even impossible for non-vaccinated to visit some places, but traveling and vacationing *are* returning. With this travel though, how do you stay prepared on the road? How does prepping and long-distance travel mesh? Let's take a closer look...

What's practical vs. What's possible

I've been advising for staying as close to our roots and resources as much as possible, until things clear up. This might still take a considerable time if we think objectively and analyze the situation. *Everywhere* things are both volatile and unstable enough to warrant caution and restraint. We must be patient and watchful, and save our resources.

But I acknowledge staying grounded isn't practical or even possible for many of us. Some people must engage in long-distance travel for work, for treatment, to see and assist friends and relatives, or even to clean up mentally. Some people think the situation is already good and "normal" enough to warrant the resumption of vacation traveling, and for those who believe that, it's fine too. Who are we to judge?

Time doesn't stop

Above all, life goes on. It's important to keep investing in staying prepared, but it's equally important to try and live as normally as the situation allows. If things loosen up, fine. If things crash down, we must be ready. Adjusting sails is critical. This up-and-down, close-and-open cycle may keep happening for some time. So, we might as well enjoy life as much as we can while we still can.

I try to strike a balance here, so no straying too far from home but also not locking down on base. I still keep visiting my parents in the interior of the country. It's a relatively short car trip, but I can also do it by bike or motorcycle, or even by foot if I'm in the mood for a multiple-day bug-out simulation trip.

Anyway, I don't know for how long I'll be around (or they), and I want to spend time together as much as possible. I also keep trekking and camping whenever I can. It's nothing fancy or expensive and keeps me sane and fit, so it's OK.

All of this allows me to keep me some level of normalcy while still investing in some areas of preparedness, still staying relatively close to my main resources. My folk's place is also my Bug Out Place where we have a community, I grow greens, and have built off-grid stuff for the past twenty years.

This is all a very personal decision, so there's no right or wrong. Assess your situation and use good judgment.

Preparedness is always with us

Whatever the case, whenever we're away from home, it can be a good idea and a sensible strategy to be prepared. (Just take a look at Rachel's story of being stranded on I95 for 16 hours in freezing temperatures.) That's the thing about prepping: it's a mentality, not something you switch on or put on pause depending on context or convenience.

Once we realize it can hit the fan (on a personal level, local, or global level) at any moment and from anywhere, we know how important it can be to have a few preps in place to increase our odds of escaping dodge.

If you're traveling by car, you can take a lot more emergency item. Traveling by plane brings a lot more restrictions and rules that all but prevent the carrying of items, mostly personal safety items (knives, guns, pepper spray, etc.).

Consider the local legislation

This is important when it comes to firearms and other self-defense items such as knives, batons, pepper spray or tasers. Long-distance travel takes you through many different legislative zones. Many places put heavy restrictions on firearms. Concealed carrying may very well be impossible, and you may even have to surrender your pistol to the authorities upon arrival. Getting caught red-handed can bring about a mini-SHTF and even have you imprisoned or deported.

The best defense is the same we should use at our home town: stay aware. Avoiding trouble is still the best strategy, and even more so when we're in foreign country and far from our resources.

Countries also impose restrictions on food items, especially seeds, plants and others "in natura". Check out for those if you plan on taking some with you.

Information is power

For safety and precaution, get informed about the situation in your destination. Do some research and get updated about the crime rate of the country(s), state(s) and town(s) you're visiting. Read about the lifestyle of the area where

you're staying, how people dress, some basic codes. Take some notes on stuff you consider important, or that may come handy in case of emergencies (like police stations, hospitals, whatever).

Most tourists like to research and take notes on attractions, restaurants and other places they look forward to visit during vacation trips. Of course, if you're visiting Rome, you want to see the Coliseum, the Vatican, whatever. But preppers also go a level deeper and research *other* important stuff. So do yourself a big favor and check out everything you may consider important beforehand.

Do a Google Maps quick run for critical installations nearby your hotel or location? Look for police stations, hospitals, and also strategic places such as prisons, diplomatic and foreign affair offices, and others.

Also write down the contact info of your country's embassy or representation in the cities or regions you're staying/visiting. In fact, consider anything you'd need to research online and write down any critical information, so you have options if you can't access the internet.

Keep a long-distance travel kit

I have a basic traveling kit which is kind of a slightly pumped-up EDC (Every Day Carry). It's still small, simple, and compact enough. This has saved me countless times during trips even much before the pandemic. We never know when a storm will hit, the lights will go off, or we'll get separated from our luggage. We can also get trapped away from our hotel or staying place for some reason.

I try to keep it simple, compact and lightweight, as a way to have these items with me all the time. Even when I'm wandering around in some beach or tourist

point, my EDC is just sitting there in my backpack together with some extra pieces of clothing, a rain jacket and my wallet.

I have an entire book written on EDCs, emergency packs and gear for various situations published here on The Organic Prepper Learning Center, for those who want to have the full scope.

- **Flashlight**

This is perhaps one of the most useful (and most used) items in this kit of mine. We can't do much in the dark. I always carry a small, potent and rechargeable LED flashlight. Depending on the trip, I also carry a headlight and a couple of chemical light batons. But a compact flashlight is usually enough for most situations.

- **Water filter**

While I can't say having my Sawyer kit plus a Lifestraw has saved my life during vacation trips, they sure have come in handy and convenient more often than not. I drink suspicious water during my street training routines and also during my camping trips, so I'm kind of used to less-than-ideal water. But there's a limit to that, of course, and when I'm far from home I tend to be more cautious, for obvious reasons.

- **Emergency blanket**

This has multiple uses in a small, compact, and light item. It helps in the cold, heat, and all in between.

- **Folding knife**

A Swiss Army or tactical folding knife of good quality have so many uses, and even more so if they have a few tools attached like flat and Philips's screwdrivers, bottle and can openers, glass breaker, a file, etc. Be sure to

dispatch with your luggage as these items can't be carried with you inside an airplane. If traveling by train, bus or car, it's fine to keep it with you. I do, most of the time.

- **Connection kit**

These are just a few cables and connectors with the essentials (USB, USB-C, mini-USB, etc.) and wall chargers compatible with your devices. Check and test beforehand.

- **Medical kit**

If you have *any* condition, you know this is a necessity, so *always* have your medicines with you (and some extras) just in case. I always take a small travel pack with a few pain and sinus medicines, some bandages in various sizes, a few cleaning swabs and a few gauzes.

Don't forget lip balm and a small pot with Vaseline (which has like a thousand uses from moisturizer to rash protection and even fire starting). I also carry a small soap bar because it's useful for cleaning cuts and bruises, or just to take an emergency shower if I lose my convenience kit for some reason.

If looking for a commercially-available medical kit/IFAK, I highly recommend checking out Stuck Pig Medical. They sell some superb IFAK kits (amongst other things) which will keep you prepared for whatever comes your way on a long-distance travel situation.

- **Sun and bug protection**

Sunburns and bug bites can turn life into hell pretty quickly. During normal times and in most tourist places this can only be a nuisance. Then, it can get us ill or at the very least very, very uncomfortable. After a storm, a landslide or other disaster, or if the power goes out, insects can be maddening. Get some after

sting or bite ointment or something as well because some bugs just won't stay away no matter what.

- **Solar kit**

I'm *always* with my small 25W solar panel with two USB outlets. I can't even say how many times it has saved me during vacation trips. Also, my 20.000mAh battery bank with small LED light (*very* useful). It's more than enough to keep my essentials charged (smartphone, flashlight/headlight, tablet, GPD, or even a radio, etc.).

- **Fire making kit**

My EDC fire making kit is just a small torch lighter and an extra regular lighter. If you prefer to be really prepared (or foresee a more serious emergency), take some storm proof matches and a flint too. Just be sure you know how to use those beforehand, though.

- **Money**

Regardless of the situation, cash can get us out of trouble. It's impossible to have gear or stuff to cover for every situation. It's just not practical and realistic to carry a full bug-out or emergency bag on every trip, vacation or not. Cash is the most flexible prepping asset. Always have some cash, some crypto and a bit of silver.

- **Documents**

I have a color copy of my documents inside a waterproof sealed envelope. I also carry a password protected pen drive with scans, and another password protected file app on my smartphone.

Extras for your long-distance travel kit

I take a pair of extra reading glasses and also impact-proof sunglasses with UV protection. Some cordage can also be very useful. Not just for survival, but to improvise a clothesline, wrapping, whatever. Paracord is a common choice, but there's really no need to be tactical here, so whatever works, works.

A lightweight rain poncho also has multiple uses during various situations (packing, tarp, ground liner, etc.). For food, I carry a small pack of MRE just in case SHTF really comes. Fortunately, I've never needed it.

There's no need to go overboard. I've faced some emergencies during my life while traveling or vacationing, but nothing extreme. Though the extreme *does* happen, and some people *do* get stranded, trapped, or even killed during emergencies, I believe the majority of disasters you'll face will be on the minor side of the scale.

Where is the balance with long-distance travel and carried gear?

Yes, things *are* right now crazy, so if there ever was a time to take extra precautions for you and your family, maybe it's not too bad of an idea to consider some of the more "extreme" preps. Again though, this is a highly personal decision.

If you really want to travel prepared, for whatever reason (use your judgment – if you have children or elders with you for instance), it makes sense to add a few optional. A small compact stove (spirit or solid fuel), gummy bears, multivitamins – these are all optional you may want to consider if you have others who are traveling with you whom you need to prep for.

There's no need to take one of every item for each person in your group. But some items are individual so having an emergency blanket and flashlight for each person can be a sensible strategy. Use your judgment so not to forgo

anything, but also to avoid going overboard. Space and weight (among other potential restrictions) are always important factors.

And don't forget to *enjoy* your trip as well. Live in the moment while maintaining situational awareness and an appropriate level of preps.

Have a nice trip, everyone!

What are some things you include for long-distance travel?

When you have a long drive ahead, what do you add to your vehicle? Share your must-haves in the comments.

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